

Message Text

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42

ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8495

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8509

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, FR

SUBJECT: EGHBAL'S COMMENTS ON CONDITIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE

1. DR. MANOUCHEHR EGHBAL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER, RETURNED TO TEHRAN RECENTLY FROM A THREE-WEEK TRIP TO WESTERN EUROPE. WHEN I ASKED HIM AT A RECEPTION HOW THINGS WERE GOING THERE, HE REPLIED, "VERY BADLY". HE THEN WENT ON TO TELL ME THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD AND HAD HAD DINNER WITH PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC IN PARIS. BOTH OF THEM ASSURED HIM THAT HIGH PRICES CAUSED BY INFLATION WERE MAKING IT INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT ELECTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE CALLED IN FRANCE. IT WAS CHIRAC'S APPRAISAL THAT IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN NEAR FUTURE, THE LEFTISTS WOULD COME TO POWER IN FRANCE. SPEAKING ABOUT ITALY, CHIRAC WAS CONVINCED THAT IT WILL HAVE A COMMUNIST-TYPE GOVERNMENT IF ELECTIONS ARE HELD THERE AS WELL. EGHBAL WENT ON TO SAY THAT WEST GERMANY IS THE ONE COUNTRY WHICH STANDS ON ITS OWN FEET BUT EVEN IT IS BEING DRAGGED ALONG IN THIS LEFTIST TREND.

2. EGHBAL'S VIEWS ARE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT NOT BECAUSE ANY US OFFICIALS REQUIRE HIS APPRAISAL BUT RATHER BECAUSE HE IS INFLUENTIAL WITH THE SHAH WHO WILL HAVE ALREADY HAD FROM HIM THESE GLOOMY ASSESSMENTS ABOUT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE. WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO KNOW WHAT

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IMPACT ON THE SHAH EGHBAL HAS HAD, BUT IT WILL MAKE HIM

THINK EVEN HARDER ABOUT OIL PRICES AND THEIR EFFECT ON
INDUSTRIALIZED ECONOMIES. (EGHBAL OBTAINED HIS MEDICAL
DOCTOR'S DEGREE IN PARIS AND IS MARRIED TO A FRENCH
WOMAN.)
HELMS

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